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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

RIMELL, SAMUEL G

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2175

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DATE MAILED: 06/15/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/816,640

Applicant(s)

FUJIWARA ET AL.

Examiner

Sam Rimell

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.


SAM RIMELL
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 7.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

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The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 7: Claim 7 refers to “rows of information”, whereas it is not clear whether these rows are rows in the original database or rows in the results of the query.

Claims 8-11: Claims 8-11 depend on claim 7.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lei et al. (U.S. Patent 6,487,552).

Claim 1: Reference is made to col. 13, line 65 through col. 14, line 27 of Lei et al. Col 14, lines 4-6 describe the submission of a SQL query (Q3). The receipt of the query by either the user computer or the server computer is a step of receiving an access for a first type of information from an information store. The first type of information is the information in a table “t” and the information store is a database. Col. 14, lines 14-16 describe the replacement of the request with a modified request in the form of a modified query (Q4). The modified request is

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based on a policy function (col. 14, line 8) which is readable as an “access policy”. The modified request then accesses certain limited information. The results comprise one or more rows of information. The presence of a masked value in the results is recited as an optional feature rather than a mandatory feature (“first information or masked value”), and thus is treated as carrying no patentable weight.

Claim 2: The function “GetContextValue(****)” is a mask function since it masks a portion of the table. The mask function will determine particular instances of information, such as information pertaining to one specific language. The mask function will determine which instances of information are displayed. The presence of masked values are optionally recited, and thus carry no patentable weight.

Claim 3: The mask function is executed to produce first information. The masked values are optionally recited.

Claim 4: The filter function is the predicate in the parentheses of the “Get Context Value (***)” function. In the example of col. 14, line 16, the filter function is “language” and limits a view of the table to a certain language.

Claim 5: The information store is a table in a database. A table forms a relational database since rows are related to columns and columns are related to rows. The initial request for information is the query (Q3) and includes a “SELECT” function. The SELECT statement initially requests all of the columns inherently provided by the table “t”. The modified request is the query (Q4) and replaces a request for all of the columns in the table with a request for only specific columns that have a particular language, specified by the predicate “Language” in the

“GetContextValue(***) statement (col. 14, lines 17-20). The “GetContextValue(****) function is a mask function.

Claim 6: The query request (Q4) includes a WHERE clause. The filter function is the predicate “Language” in the “GetContextValue(****)” mask function.

Claim 7: Col. 14, line 4 provides an initial query (Q3) that includes a SELECT statement. The SELECT statement makes a reference to a table (t), thus inherently refers to all of the columns contained in that table. As Seen in col. 14, lines 14-16, the query (Q3) is replaced by a query (Q4), which is a modified query that includes a mask function. The mask function is the GetContextValue(****) function. The predicate within this mask function (a particular language) refers to specific columns in the database (col. 14, lines 17-20). The query result from the modified query produces a view of the table that pertains to one specific language. In the last paragraph of claim 7, it is not clear whether the results refer to the database itself or the results from the query. The database which is queried by the query Q4 includes rows of information and values that may be masked by the mask function.

Claim 8: The method incorporates the usage of a WHERE clause. The WHERE clause is modified by the usage of the “GetContextValue(***) in the WHERE clause. The predicate “Language” within the GetContextValue(***)” function in col. 14, line 16 is the filter function.

Claim 9: FIG. 2 illustrates a database server which receives the queries from the clients.

Claim 10-11: The actual replacement of the query with a modified query are described as occurring on the server side of the system (col. 9, lines 62-64). However, col. 18, lines 11-14 describe an option where the functions are distributed on the client side, so the functionality can actually be placed on either the client side or server side of the client-server architecture.

Claim 12: See remarks for claim 1.

Claim 13: See remarks for claim 4.

Claim 14: See remarks for claim 5.

Claim 15: See remarks for claim 6.

Claim 16: See client server architecture of FIG. 2.

Claim 17: See remarks for claim 5. Note that the server is a relational database by reason that it contains tables of data. A table is a relational data structure.

Claim 18: See remarks for claim 2.

Claim 19: See remarks for claim 6. Note that the server is a relational database by reason that it contains tables of data. A table is a relational data structure.

Claim 20: See remarks for claim 2.

Remarks

Applicant's arguments have been considered.

Claims 1 and 12: Applicant argues that the reference to Lei et al. does not disclose the feature of having rows of a query result modified by using a masking value. In claim 1, the masked value is optionally recited, so it is considered as carrying no patentable weight. In claim 12, it is not clear whether the phrase "some rows" is referring to the query result or the original database which is being queried. The database which is queried does include rows of data as well as data values that can be hidden by applying the mask function in query Q4. These hidden values thus become masked values.

Claims 2, 18 and 20: Applicant's arguments essentially reflect those set forth in claims 1 and 12. Examiner finds that recitation for masked values are optionally recited and thus carry no patentable weight.

Claim 3: Applicant argues that Lei et al. does not disclose the masked values in the query results. However, the masked values are optionally recited.

Claims 4 and 13: Applicant argues that Lei et al. does not disclose the concept of eliminating one or more rows of information by applying the mask function. Examiner finds that the mask function eliminates the display of particular rows from the database.

Claims 6, 8, 9, 15, 16 and 19: Applicant does not present any specific arguments. The rejections of these claims are therefore sustained.

Claims 5, 7, 14 and 17: Applicant argues that the SELECT statement referred to in Lei et al. does not make reference to specific columns in the database. These arguments are somewhat confusing because the claims at issue actually make reference to two different queries using two different SELECT statements. Applicant's arguments are correct with respect to the first query Q3. This query does make a request for a generic set of columns. However, in the query Q4, the query will only make reference to very specific columns based on the predicate used in the query (col. 14, lines 17-20). Applicant argues that the query Q4 does not replace one or column references with a mask function and that the query Q3 does not make any column references. Both of these arguments are incorrect. In the query Q4, the SELECT statement has been replaced by a new SELECT statement that has a new definition for the variable "t". That definition is the mask function shown in col. 14, line 16. In addition, SELECT statements used in SQL always

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make reference to at least some columns in a database. If a SELECT statement used in a SQL query were unable to call up columns of a database, the statement would not be functional.

Claims 10-11: Applicant argues that the replacement step is not performed by the client. Examiner maintains that this feature is taught at col. 18, lines 11-14, where it is taught that the components that perform the masking function can be distributed on the client side of the network architecture.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Sam Rimell at telephone number (703) 306-5626.



Sam Rimell
Primary Examiner
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